



Thomas A. Schatz

President

February 1, 2012

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative,

Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Calif.) has introduced H.R. 1734, the Civilian Property Realignment Act. On behalf of the more than one million members and supporters of the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW), I urge you to support this legislation.

According to a June 9, 2011 Government Accountability Office report, 24 federal agencies identified 45,190 underutilized buildings that cost \$1.66 billion annually to operate. This large inventory is the product of a convoluted and inefficient disposal process. Current law requires that any federal real property identified by an agency as having no further use, or serving a purpose that could be satisfied with only a portion of the property, must be screened for use by other agencies prior to its sale. If the property goes unclaimed, it is then screened for homeless use. Any properties remaining at the end of this process are put up for public auction and sold to the highest bidder. This drawn-out disposal procedure can often last multiple years, during which time taxpayers are on the hook for the massive maintenance costs associated with operating these buildings.

Rep. Denham's legislation would expedite and reform the disposal process by establishing an independent Civilian Property Realignment Commission that would make property recommendations to Congress. These recommendations would be approved en bloc by the President and Congress, which would help to ensure that special interests are removed from the process. Among its responsibilities, the commission must within 180 days of the appointment of its members identify and submit to the President and Congress at least 5 federal properties with a total fair market value of at least \$500 million that are not already on the list of surplus or excess properties. Properties of the Department of Veterans Affairs and properties that are deemed essential for reasons of national security are not subject to the commission's jurisdiction. The Office of Management and Budget estimates that the legislation would produce at least \$15 billion in future savings. All proceeds from property sales would be put toward deficit reduction.

Placing long, drawn-out administrative roadblocks in the way of the government's ability to sell properties and produce billions of dollars to help pay down the deficit is wasteful and highly inefficient. I strongly urge you to support Rep. Denham's legislation to overhaul the federal government's property disposal framework and begin reducing the nation's \$1.3 trillion deficit. All votes on H.R. 1734 will be among those considered in CCAGW's *2012 Congressional Ratings*.

Sincerely,

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